



# THE LOCAL HEALTH LINK

Stimulating Shorts from Frankfort

## STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

*-submitted by Sharon Stumbo, MA,  
MHA, Deputy Commissioner, DPH*

### What is Public Health?

A tale from the East tells of three blind men trying to describe an elephant. One declared, feeling its trunk, "the elephant is long and sinuous, like the snake." Another, putting his hands on the elephant's leg, said, "no, not like a snake, but stocky like a tree." The third man at the elephant's side said, "no, you are both wrong, it is broad like a house." "You are each a little right, but all of you are wrong," the wise man told them. "Each of you touched only part of the elephant, but you weren't able to know the whole elephant."

Because individual Kentuckians may have come in contact with a *single* part of the public health system, they may

think it is the *whole* of public health. This is why the Department for Public Health is involved in a strategic planning process. We needed to develop a clear understanding of public health. Commissioner Leach realizes that our Department needs to develop a direction that is congruent with all of our stakeholders' and customers' needs. He realizes that we must look beyond government to community and personal responsibility. Health is the common denominator in any society, in every community. It is time to redefine, reinforce and restructure the way we conduct public business in Kentucky.

### What are the Strategic Planning Components for this process?

- ☛ Evaluation of existing plans
- ☛ Data collection and analysis
- ☛ Conduct surveys: telephone and mail
- ☛ Identify stakeholders throughout the state
- ☛ Conduct five (5) planning retreats for the stakeholders
- ☛ Support local community needs assessment activities
- ☛ Conduct one-on-one interviews with

stakeholders: internally and externally

- ☛ Conduct a conference on the future of public health
- ☛ Compile all information and draft a public health improvement plan
- ☛ Circulate a draft document to stakeholders
- ☛ Conduct public forums throughout the state
- ☛ Revision of the public health improvement plan
- ☛ Presentation to the Governor, legislators, and the public

### Time Line?

The process that has just been described will occur by December 1997.

### What will we have?

A document that establishes a **process** that gives a focus and direction to our public health department.

The key word is **process** and an understanding that this process will be revisited.

A document that will help guide our

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decisions.

A document that provides a framework for the local health departments to meet the needs of their communities.

A document that will link the identified goals and objectives to our financial management plan.

**NOTE: See attached Public Health Strategic Planning Process flowchart.**

## Central Office Comments

### Leach's Lines

As most of you know, I spend a lot of time traveling around the state to meetings and to visit health departments. In the process, I come across Bragging Rights for counties, districts, and the state health department. Here are a few of them from the last few weeks.

*Barren River District field trip, August 21-22.*

Simpson County has enlisted the support of over ½ the county's churches in their teenage pregnancy prevention project, Project Respect. This came about as a result of their Community Health Assessment Team's (CHAT) work with key people in the community. Congratulations to Mary Joyner and the Simpson County Health Department for their efforts to move away from their undesirable statistics in teenage pregnancies and pregnancies among unmarried women. Thanks also to the Franklin Favorite for publishing these endeavors in the newspaper.

Barren County....one staffer described their health department as the "STD pros." When asked what she meant she said that their STD workload had increased significantly as a result of

their efforts to talk to the male contacts and to their ability to have this discussion in their larger and more medically confidential clinic building. How about that! Talk to the men and you'll do a better job with STD. If there are those among us who are reluctant to speak to males about STD and pregnancy, perhaps they should follow the Barren County example.

Logan County....this is the most laid back group of public health workers I've run into. They didn't see that they were doing anything more than what they were supposed to. After further discussion it became apparent that "doing what they were supposed to" included adding a prenatal clinic with no new staff, maintaining other services steady in the presence of increased work, performing significant amounts of Hepatitis B immunization, and improving their overall productivity. Those are my kind of people.

Butler County....they have made a major advance in their immunization levels from the sixty percent level. They say they aren't at ninety percent yet but they plan to get there because "they just decided they could do better."

Edmonson County...shared their community health assessment document. The service most appreciated by the citizens of Edmonson County is Environmental Health because their guy tries to help them stay in compliance with the rules. There is a lot more going on besides environmental health....close working relationships with the doctors for example. I emphasize the environmental health issue because in Edmonson County, they clearly get RESPECT!

Hart County....immunizations are so popular here that people who don't use the health department come in to see about getting T-shirts for their children.

Warren County and the District office....the privatization of services to patients who traditionally use health departments is in full swing here. Newspaper advertisements to say that "Medicaid Patients Have a Choice" are showing up and the Western Kentucky University television station is running 30 minute shows on the subject. The county and the district are rising to the challenge by identifying ways to strengthen core public health activities for all the county's citizens. Their injury prevention activities have resulted in improved street lighting, reduced speed limits, and warning signs in a foreign language to prevent drowning.

Metcalf County....by the time I made it to Edmonton, it was so late in the day that most of the staff had left so I didn't have as much time to hear first hand about their work; however, we were introduced to one of Kentucky's best kept secrets....meals at the Sulfur Well Cafe on State Route 70 just west of the intersection with U.S. 68. It's a Rickard 4-star facility and he hasn't even been there yet.

At the state level, the book of Proceedings of the Governor's Conference on the Future of Public Health in Kentucky is ready and may have already been received by those who attended the conference. The strategic plan document is working its way through the writing and editing process and is expected to be ready well before the 1998 session of the General Assembly and our favorite strategic planner, Sharon Stumbo, Deputy Commissioner, has been asked by Secretary Morse to take the lead in developing a Cabinet for Health Services Strategic Plan.

I am sure that there is other meaningful news that I've overlooked so send it in. If you do the work, we'll brag about it.  
-submitted by Rice C. Leach, MD,  
Commissioner, DPH

## SLHA Statements

### Health Report Card Identifies Community Strengths and Weaknesses

In an effort to monitor the health pulse of its constituency, the Northern Kentucky Independent District Health Department has developed the first in a series of annual Health Report Cards for Northern Kentucky. The report was presented by Robert Smith, Public Health Director, to the Northern Kentucky Independent District Board of Health on Wednesday, September 17 at 7:00 p.m. This presentation took place at the Health Department's Health Education and Environmental center located at 610 Medical Village Drive, Edgewood, Kentucky.

The report card reveals grades assigned to public health indicators in five general areas: Maternal, Infant, and Child Health; Chronic Disease; Communicable Disease; Injuries and Crime; and Environmental Health. Highlights of the report card included grades in the "a" range for infant mortality, tuberculosis, homicide, motor vehicle crash deaths, and child physical and sexual abuse. The community received low marks for lung cancer deaths, teen births, diabetes, suicide, and air quality.

"The Report Card is intended to define community health strengths and weaknesses," said Public Health Director, Robert Smith.

"It identifies areas of progress and areas of need in the community and encourages you to think about your own health and the health of the community."

Letter grades were identified by comparing Northern Kentucky statistics with the state and with *Healthy*

*Kentuckians 2000* goals. The community received high marks if it exceeded state rates as well as state goals and low marks where it fell short of these rates and goals.

"This report card defines some of our strengths and weaknesses and identifies progress and needs," said Mary Ann Barnes, Chair of the Northern Kentucky Board of Health.

The District Board of Health Meeting is open to the public and citizens are encouraged to become aware of their community's health needs and successes. Copies of the report card may be obtained by calling the Health Department at (606) 341-4264, by E-mail request at [nkidhd@one.net](mailto:nkidhd@one.net), and in select area libraries. The report card is also on the Health Department's web page at <http://w3.one.net/~nkidhd>. - submitted by Peggy Patterson, M.Ed., R.D., Public Information Coordinator, Northern Kentucky Independent District Health Department

## Training Tidbits

### FALL REGIONAL CONFERENCES: MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The dates and locations of the 1997 Fall Regional Conferences are as follows:  
Oct. 9-10 KY Dam Village  
Oct. 16-17 Jenny Wiley  
Oct. 20-21 Louisville  
Nov. 6-7 Lake Cumberland  
Please mark your calendars and plan on attending the conference in your area. It has been a while since the last set of regionals, so a lot of new information will be shared. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

**RTC Training Courses Offered - FY 1998:** The Regional Training Center (RTC), Atlanta, GA, will be conducting fifteen (15) training courses for local health department (LHD) personnel during the current fiscal year. These

efforts are being coordinated through the Department for Public Health, Training and Development Branch. These are one-day sessions, and there is no fee for those individuals attending these courses. As you will notice, the training locations are being spread to more regions of the state to make the offerings more accessible to all LHD staff in an effort to reduce costs and to make it easier for staff to attend these trainings.

Information concerning the first three (3) courses has already been mailed to District Training Coordinators and single county LHDs. The remaining mailings will be forwarded to LHDs approximately four (4) months prior to each training course. Course dates, locations, and titles are listed below.

11/21/97 Dawson Springs  
- Creating an Efficient Clinic

12/5/97 Prestonsburg  
- Handling Difficult People

1/16/98 Lexington  
- Marketing Public Health

1/30/98 Bowling Green  
- STD Update

2/6/98 Lexington  
- Postponing Sexual Involvement

3/27/98 Somerset  
- Current Reproductive Health Issues-  
RNs

3/27/98 Lexington  
- Evaluating Your Program

4/3/98 Owensboro  
- Abnormal Pap Smears

4/17/98 Lexington  
- Family Violence

4/24/98 Bowling Green  
- HIV / AIDS Update

5/1/98 Lexington  
- Orientation for New Family Planning  
RNs

5/21-22/98 Lexington  
- Current Reproductive Health Issues-  
Clinicians

5/29/98 Ashland  
- Counseling Adolescents

6/12/98 Dawson Springs  
- Handling Difficult People

6/19/98 Morehead  
- TB: Meeting the New Challenge

Should you have any questions  
regarding this information, please  
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